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RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 7404
RUEHGH/AMCONSUL SHANGHAI 1816
RUEHSH/AMCONSUL SHENYANG 5662
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SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: SEOUL - PRESS BULLETIN; FEBRUARY 26, 2010

TOP HEADLINES

Chosun Ilbo

Universities Have Received Billions of Won Annually
from On-Campus Banks, while Disallowing Credit Card Payment of
Tuition Fees

JoongAng Ilbo

Full Investigation Begins into Educational Corruption
and Irregularities in College Admissions

Dong-a Ilbo

Overseas Travel Ban Imposed on Former Head of Seoul Education Office
in Money-for-Promotion Probe

Hankook Ilbo

Some 250 Middle School Seniors Involved in Admission Scandals
Involving Private Autonomous High Schools

Hankyoreh Shinmun, Segye Ilbo, All TVs

Top Court Upholds Capital Punishment in 5-4 Split Decision

Seoul Shinmun

President Lee Calls for Constitutional Revision on Limited Basis

DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS

Visiting U.S. Special Representative for North Korea Policy Stephen
Bosworth discussed ways to resume the Six-Party Talks yesterday with
chief ROK nuclear negotiator, Wi Sung-lac. (Dong-a, Hankyoreh, all
TVs)

The National Assembly yesterday passed a motion to dispatch 350 ROK
troops to Afghanistan on a mission to protect civilian
reconstruction workers in the war-torn country. Lawmakers of
opposition parties walked out of the Assembly in protest of the
deployment. (All)

The Unification Ministry yesterday disclosed a revised version of
the "Basic Plan for Inter-Korean Relations," which was adopted by
the former Roh Moo-hyun Administration. The revised version seeks to

expand inter-Korean economic cooperation only if North Korea decides to give up its nuclear program. (Chosun, Hankook, Hankyoreh)

MEDIA ANALYSIS

-N. Korea

Most ROK media covered yesterday's arrival in Seoul of Special Representative for North Korea Policy Stephen Bosworth, quoting him as saying upon arrival: "We are prepared to resume the Six-Party Talks in the very near future." According to media reports, Ambassador Bosworth and chief ROK nuclear negotiator Wi Sung-lac discussed ways to resume the Six-Party Talks.

Right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo carried an op-ed that said: "While the greatest military challenge facing the U.S. is (the war in) Afghanistan, its greatest diplomatic challenge is to deter Iran from developing nuclear weapons. Whenever the Obama Administration gives warnings about Iran, it typically mentions North Korea (simultaneously). As such, if the U.S. shows any sign of ignoring the North's nuclear development, such an action will immediately prompt Iran to misjudge that it is okay to continue its nuclear development. This is why the ROKG is closely watching developments surrounding the Iranian (nuclear) issue. ... We (Korea) most likely have a stronger desire than Ambassador Bosworth to see peace on the Korean Peninsula by engaging North Korea. However ... a cool-headed

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approach is required when dealing with North Korea."

-Afghanistan

All ROK media reported on yesterday's passage by the National Assembly of a motion to dispatch 350 ROK troops to Afghanistan, despite protests from opposition parties. According to media reports, the troops will be sent to Parwan Province in July, with a two-and-a-half-year mandate to protect ROK civilian reconstruction workers there.

Left-leaning Hankyoreh Shinmun editorialized: "The deployment decision is a far cry from the current state of affairs in the international community. ... Far from rooting out terrorism, the war and occupation (in Afghanistan) is intensifying resistance from local militants. Accordingly, the U.S. announced plans to start withdrawing troops next year. ... Civilian provincial reconstruction team (PRT) workers have been targets of attack because militants treat them the same as occupying forces. ... With this decision (to send troops to Afghanistan), ROK citizens, as well as the troops deployed, will face an even greater danger of being attacked."

OPINIONS/EDITORIALS

ADDED VALUE OF AFGHAN TROOP DISPATCH
(JoongAng Ilbo, February 26, 2010, Page 35; Excerpts)

By Senior International Affairs Columnist Kim Young-hie

In a plenary session of the Korean National Assembly yesterday, a bill was passed to deploy troops to Afghanistan. Why do we have to send our young troops to a faraway land in West Asia, a nation which we think we have no direct interest in? We can find an answer by looking back to the Korean War, which marks its 60th anniversary this year. During the war, it was troops from 16 nations that saved the ROK from a desperately dangerous situation. Those 16 nations combined sent a total of 930,000 troops annually over the course of three years to prevent the ROK from being communized. The ROK in the 1950s was most likely stranger to the 16 nations than Afghanistan is to us. At that time, the ROK was a new nation founded only two years following its liberation from Japan five years earlier.

To the opponents of troop dispatch to Afghanistan, I would say that

the U.S. spent over USD 30 billion (USD 320 billion when adjusted to 2008 prices) on the Korean War and sent the ROK approximately 480,000 troops, of which 54,000 were killed in battle. Opponents might respond, "That is because the Korean War was effectively a U.S. war." Then, why did the other 15 countries send their troops? To see many of them killed in the battlefields? Since they shared the great cause of defending freedom and peace, a large number of troops were sent to the Korean War despite the fact that there would be many victims.

On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Korean War, we now have an opportunity to repay the debt of lives, which a poor and weak Korea owed to the international community six decades ago, by sending our troops to Afghanistan. The ROK's per-capita income has soared from USD 67 to over USD 20,000, and its Gross Domestic Production (GDP), which stood at USD 1.3 billion, is estimated at USD 1 trillion this year. Noblesse Oblige, a French phrase meaning "Privilege entails responsibility" is applied not only to individuals but also to nations. As a developed country set to host the G20 summit (this year), the ROK should not hesitate to hold out a helping hand to the war-ravaged country as it seeks economic and social reconstruction and improvement of living conditions (there).

However, if we send our troops to Afghanistan only to repay the debt from the Korean War and carry out our moral responsibility, it will be a loss of opportunity. We should create the best "added value" from the Afghan troop dispatch. The soldiers to be deployed are outstanding youth selected on a competition rate of 10 to 1. The

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troop dispatch could prove an opportunity for them and 150 members of the Provincial Reconstruction Team to become experts on Afghanistan and the West Asian region, as well as top employees of companies which will enter the region. If only 10 to 50 of them become experts or corporate employees specializing in the region, it will be a precious "added value" of the deployment.

Before sending troops to Afghanistan, we need to educate them about international politics and economics surrounding Afghanistan, various conflicts of interest among major countries (over the region), and the civilization and culture of West Asia. If our soldiers take this Afghan deployment as an opportunity to open their eyes to a new part of the world, and stimulate their adventurism and pioneer spirit so that Afghanistan and West Asia become a main pillar of their and the ROK's future, the troop dispatch will be producing significantly more "added value."

POWER OF OBAMA-STYLE N. KOREA SANCTIONS
(JoongAng Ilbo, February 26, Page 34)

By Deputy Political Affairs Editor Kang Chan-ho

Former U.S. President George W. Bush, who served from 2001 to 2009, called North Korean leader, Kim Jong-il, "an axis of evil" or "a pigmy." However, his actions were the opposite (of his words.) President Bush removed North Korea from the list of state sponsors of terrorism to which the Reagan Administration had added them twenty years ago when his father, former President George H. W. Bush, served as Vice President. President George W. Bush also returned to Kim 24 million dollars (USD) in personal funds that were confiscated by the U.S. Department of Treasury. During his final term in office, he (President George W. Bush) even delivered Kim a letter that began with "Dear Mr. Chairman."

Even though President Bush disliked North Korea, he did not consider North Korea an urgent policy issue. Rather, he established the Six-Party Talks framework involving China as a host, and attempted to block North Korean (activists). However, following the North's nuclear test in 2006, Bush softened his stance by giving carte blanche to dovish Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill. But his diplomacy ended in failure according to Jack Pritchard, former U.S. Envoy to North Korea during the Bush Administration. Bush did not run into any political difficulty due to his strong ideological base. What dealt a blow to him was a financial crisis that hit the U.S. during his final term in office.

President Obama is taking an approach opposite to that of President George W. Bush. He does not speak in a hostile way toward North Korea. However, sanctions the Obama Administration has imposed on the North due to its second nuclear test in May are considered more stringent and effective. Even though North Korea says pleadingly, "We will return to the Six-Party Talks if sanctions are lifted and a peace treaty is signed," Obama has not budged an inch.

Why is Obama taking this approach toward North Korea? First, President Obama has a weak political and ideological base. According to a recent Gallop poll, 61 percent of Americans think that North Korea poses a serious threat. As such, President Obama has a limited range of soft measures that he can implement because he needs to embrace conservatives as his supporters. On the diplomatic front, he should also be mindful of Iran's (nuclear development.) While the greatest military challenge facing the U.S. is (the war in) Afghanistan, its greatest diplomatic challenge is to deter Iran from developing nuclear weapons. Whenever the Obama Administration gives warnings about Iran, it typically mentions North Korea (simultaneously). As such, if the U.S. shows any sign of ignoring the North's nuclear development, such an action will immediately prompt Iran to misjudge that it is okay to continue its nuclear development. This is why the ROKG is closely watching developments surrounding the Iranian (nuclear) issue.

The ROK's pro-North Korea leftists, who have misjudged President Obama, seem to be counting on U.S. Special Representative for North

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Korea Policy Stephen Bosworth, who is also known as a "dove." However, if North Korea, which staged two nuclear tests, keeps insisting on unreasonable demands such as lifting sanctions and a peace treaty with the U.S., it will be hard for Ambassador Bosworth to persuade Secretary of State Clinton and other non-proliferation officials (to take a soft line on North Korea.) Appearing on a TV talk show last month, Bosworth said that Kim Jong-il is not insane and he truly believes that the U.S. can engage North Korea. We most likely have a stronger desire than Ambassador Bosworth to see peace on the Korean Peninsula by engaging North Korea. However, a warm heart alone is not enough. Rather, a cool-headed approach is required when dealing with North Korea.

UNILATERAL TROOP REDEPLOYMENT DECISION SHOULD BE WITHDRAWN
(Hankyoreh Shinmun, February 26, Page 31)

Yesterday, on the second anniversary of the inauguration of President Lee Myung-bak, the Lee Administration and ruling Grand National Party (GNP) unilaterally passed a bill in the National Assembly approving the redeployment of troops to Afghanistan, sending our officers and troops into an extremely dangerous area. This was pushed through without sufficient discussion over the matter in which the lives and safety of the people and the nation's credibility rests. This is anti-democratic and anti-citizen behavior that reveals rashness, in addition to arrogance and self-righteousness.

The decision is a clear reversal of a previous agreement. In 2007, the government promised to both domestic and international audiences that it would withdraw from Afghanistan, and by the end of that year Korean engineering and medical units were completely withdrawn. This decision was reached after the kidnapping of 23 South Korean civilians, of which two died. Prior to this, sergeant Yoon Jang-ho was also killed. In the process, we learned the costly lesson that our unjustified dispatch of troops came at a great cost and resulted in a great deal of pain. Yesterday, however, the Lee government completely reversed this agreement. Naturally, we worry about the possible loss of our nation's credibility.

The deployment decision is a far cry from the current state of affairs in the international community. Recently, the number of deaths of U.S. troops in Afghanistan has been on the rise, and the issue of civilian deaths is becoming even more serious. Far from rooting out terrorism, the war and occupation (in Afghanistan) is intensifying resistance from local militants. Accordingly, the U.S.

announced plans to start withdrawing troops next year. In this situation, we are the only country in the world planning to redeploy troops. We cannot help but ask whether the Lee government is ignorant of the situation or is merely closing its eyes to please the U.S.

The Lee government claimed it would organize a provincial reconstruction team (PRT), in which civilian workers would be sent to perform humanitarian activities, while the military component would engage in only protection duty. However, civilian provincial reconstruction team (PRT) workers have been targets of attack because militants treat them the same as occupying forces. In early November of last year, when news broke that our government was planning to redeploy troops to Afghanistan, an armed group attacked the construction site of a Korean company. Despite this, the Lee government, without revealing the specifics of their plan, has pushed for the redeployment. With this decision (to send troops to Afghanistan), ROK citizens, as well as the troops deployed, will face an even greater danger of being attacked.

The period of deployment in yesterday's bill of two years and six months is also uncharacteristically. In a situation in which it would be insufficient even if annual parliamentary reports and approvals were issued as a result of confusion and danger on the ground, the Lee government has been issued a blank check. Moreover, the GNP has not held a single public hearing about the redeployment, and has also rendered powerless parliamentary debate. The Lee government must withdraw its decision to redeploy troops to

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Afghanistan.

(This is a translation provided by the newspaper, and it is identical to the Korean version.)

FEATURES

U.S. FORCES' "OTHER WAR" (IN AFGHANISTAN)
(Chosun Ilbo, February 26, Page 7)

By Washington Correspondent Lee Ha-won

On February 24, an opening ceremony for the addition of a vinyl house and irrigation facilities was held, with the U.S.'s Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles standing guard, at an agricultural training center of the Provincial Agriculture Department in Charikar, the capital of Parwan, Afghanistan. This place is about a 5-minute drive from an area where the ROK's Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) will be stationed.

Parwan Governor Basir Salangi and Lieutenant Graves from the Agricultural Development Team (ADT) at Bagram Air Base cut the (ceremonial) tape in front of the green-roofed vinyl house, drawing applause from the audience. Governor Salangi and 50 other influential officials joyfully passed through the vinyl house under which the irrigation facilities are installed.

Looking around a water tank and a pump set up just beside the vinyl house, they showed an expression of satisfaction. Commanding officer, Lieutenant Graves, presented a certificate of appreciation to Ab Lazak Kohistani, President of Jamashal, the Afghan company which constructed these facilities. Governor Salangi also expressed his appreciation to the U.S. for building the great facilities.

These facilities, which were constructed by the U.S. forces at a cost of USD 68,000, are not substantial in size. The facilities only include a 20-meter vinyl house and a small water tank installed over 10 meters above ground.

However, local residents and U.S. forces sought to find a future of hope through such facilities, which are rare in Afghanistan. The irrigation facilities will serve 300 Afghan residents in this region. However, the greater purpose is to use them as educational facilities and lift Afghan agricultural skill from its rudimentary

stage. Lieutenant Peterson, an agricultural expert from the ADT said, "We hope Afghan residents will properly acquire farming technology to sustain their lives."

The ADT, which is in charge of this construction and agricultural assistance to Parwan, belongs to the Kentucky National Guard. The team is in charge of Afghanistan's agricultural development and related education programs. It teaches agricultural and livestock techniques, including how to plant seeds and use fertilizer. Sergeant Ramsey, who freely mingled with local residents on February 24 while helping them make an Afghanistan traditional soup, teaches residents livestock techniques, drawing high popularity. In addition to him, other U.S. soldiers with technical knowledge of agriculture, and officials from the U.S. Department of Agriculture teach agricultural techniques every one or two weeks.

The U.S. military regrets that local participation is not as high as expected. Lt. Col. Graves said, "Since people are so busy eking out a living, technical education programs have moved to the back burner."

These activities by the U.S. are part of its strategy to win the heart of Afghan residents. In many regions in Afghanistan, including Parwan, the U.S. is focusing its efforts on teaching the Afghan people survival techniques. By serving as a "mentor" to residents, the U.S. intends to end hostilities against the U.S. military and stabilize the situation. A soldier of the ADT noted, "People outside of Afghanistan think that the U.S. is only waging

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war here. In fact, however, we are paying much more attention to reconstruction in Afghanistan, which is rarely known."

Behind these activities lie the U.S.'s future strategy to use Afghanistan as a stronghold for targeting Central Asia, the region called a "repository of resources." The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) has invested USD 17 million in searching Afghanistan, which is three times as large as the Korean Peninsula, for resources. One study estimates that natural minerals, such as copper and iron ore, as well as oil and natural gas in Afghanistan are worth about USD 1 trillion.

TOKOLA